



City of New Bedford  
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

City of New Bedford  
Office of the Mayor  
Contact: Elizabeth Treadup Pio  
(508) 979-1410  
[etreadup@newbedford-ma.gov](mailto:etreadup@newbedford-ma.gov)

Date: March 10, 2014  
For Immediate Release

## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

### **Headmaster Named to Lead New Bedford High School**

#### *Two Principals Appointed to Lead Under New High School Organizational Structure*

**New Bedford, Massachusetts**—Kathleen Dawson, Assistant Headmaster of Boston Public Schools John D. O’Bryant School of Mathematics and Science has been named as the Headmaster at New Bedford High School.

“Ms. Dawson brings an exceptionally strong combination of knowledge, experience, and passion to the needs of New Bedford High School. In addition to her work at the O’Bryant School, Ms. Dawson has served in leadership roles at Madison Park Technical Vocational as well as other Boston high schools. She has faced nearly every issue in urban education and she has overseen the work that we need to undertake here in New Bedford to build and sustain the conditions for success that will provide momentum for change and accelerated student achievement,” said Dr. Durkin.

John McDonough, Superintendent of Boston Public Schools praised Dawson for her leadership abilities, "New Bedford is very fortunate to welcome a strong educator and school leader in Kathleen Dawson. She has served Boston well, and we will miss her. I have every confidence in her ability to improve the lives of the students she serves."

Ms. Dawson earned a masters degree in education and school leadership from Harvard University and a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from the University of Wisconsin in Superior. Currently, Ms. Dawson is working to complete her doctoral degree in educational and organizational leadership at the University of Pennsylvania. She also serves as an adjunct professor at the Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston.

## ***Two Principals Appointed to Lead Under New High School Organizational Structure***

A key strategy of the New Bedford High School Turnaround Plan to address the goal of increasing time on learning and reorganizing the school structure is to take bold, ambitious steps to build an organization based on collaboration and trust which supports student learning. The Turnaround Plan includes the establishment of a new organizational structure at the high school which will consist of a lower school (grades 9-10) and an upper school (grades 11-12). The Upper and Lower Schools will each be headed by a Principal that will report directly to the Headmaster. This new structure will encourage a more cohesive school culture that will include clear expectations for all students, particularly for 9<sup>th</sup> graders who will benefit from increased focus and support as they transition from middle school to high school.

New Bedford High School Superintendent Dr. Pia Durkin announced today the appointment of Michael Lazzareschi as Principal of the Lower school and Sean McNiff as Principal of the Upper school.

Michael Lazzareschi, who will oversee Grades 9-10, has broad and deep understanding of both high school and middle school students as he led the effort to re-invent a successful new middle school in Providence, Rhode Island. He has served as a principal for eleven years in urban districts at various levels and has led the charge for results in each of those assignments. Mr. Lazzareschi holds master's degree from Providence College and bachelor's degree from Rhode Island College. He is enrolled in a joint program by Rhode Island College and the University of Rhode Island to obtain his doctorate.

Sean McNiff, who will oversee Grades 11-12, recently served as Principal of South Hadley High School where his leadership successfully brought together staff and students in the wake of a tragic student event. He also served at Marblehead High School and in Fitchburg Public Schools where he worked with students in an alternative education setting. Mr. McNiff is eager to return to his passion, urban education, here in New Bedford. He holds his a bachelor's degree from Fitchburg State College, a law degree from New England School of Law, and is working on his doctorate in educational leadership from the American International College in Springfield, Massachusetts.

###

Find us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/CityofNewBedford](http://www.facebook.com/CityofNewBedford) and  
Twitter [www.twitter.com/NewBedford\\_MA](http://www.twitter.com/NewBedford_MA)!